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Contact: Boa Lee

Tel: 076 515 000

U.S. Chargée d’Affaires Swears In Peace Corps Response Volunteers

(FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE) -- On Friday, September 28, the United States Embassy in Sierra Leone Chargée d’Affaires Kathleen FitzGibbon swore in five new Peace Corps Response Volunteers who will work at universities throughout Sierra Leone. This is the first group of Response Volunteers to serve in Sierra Leone.

The swearing in ceremony took place at the U.S. Embassy in Freetown and came at the conclusion of a two week training period for the Response Volunteers.

The Response Volunteers will each serve 11 months as teacher trainers at Njala University (both Njala and Bo campuses), Eastern Polytechnic in Kenema, Northern Polytechnic in Makeni, and at Port Loko Teachers College. In addition to teacher training, the Volunteers may deliver courses in their subject specialties ranging from science to English to cultural studies.

Ms. FitzGibbon said the arrival of the Response Volunteers to Sierra Leone “demonstrates the trust, faith, and friendship that the United States and Sierra Leone have in each other.” She went on to say that “When we talk about making a positive impact in the classroom, we cannot just talk about teaching students,” adding that it is also important to equip teachers with an effective skills set through proper education and training.

Ms. FitzGibbon thanked the Response Volunteers for their service and remarked that the Response Volunteers will be leaving a lasting impression on Sierra Leoneans they meet during their service year.

“I don’t want you to forget how proud Americans are of your service,” Ms. FitzGibbon said.

Sierra Leone’s Director of the Department for the Americas and Pacific Countries in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr. Rosaline Turay; the Chief Education Officer in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Salieu Kamara; and the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Njala University Professor Abu Sesay attended the swearing-in ceremony.

Peace Corps Response provides seasoned U.S. professionals the opportunity to serve in rewarding, short-term and high impact assignments around the world. The Peace Corps Response Volunteers bring high-level skills and professional experience to their assignments.

The U.S. Peace Corps-Sierra Leone relationship started in 1962. The Peace Corps halted activity in Sierra Leone during Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war but returned to the country in 2010 at the invitation of the Government of Sierra Leone. Peace Corps currently has 91 Volunteers serving in Sierra Leone at junior and secondary schools and universities.

The U.S. Peace Corps, an independent U.S. government agency, began with a challenge by then-Senator John F. Kennedy for Americans to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. Since it began in 1961, more than 200,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served in 139 countries that have requested assistance. For more information on the Peace Corps, go online to www.peacecorps.gov.